him: A handful cannot satisfy a lion, nor can a pit be filled up with its own clods.[20] He said to them: Then go out in troops and attack [the enemy for plunder]. They at once took counsel with Ahithofel and consulted the Sanhedrin and questioned the Urim and Tummim.[21] R. Joseph says: What verse [may be cited in support of this]? And after Ahithofel was Jehoiada, the son of Benaiah,[22] and Abiathar; and the captain of the King's host was Joab.[23] 'Ahithofel', this was the counsellor. And so it is said: Now the counsel of Ahithofel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man inquired of the word of God.[24]

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(1) So that there is no danger of falling debris.

(2) The assumption is that where two are together there is no danger of an attack by demons.

(3) Judg. VII, 19.

(4) How does he explain the term middle?

(5) Ps. CXIX, 62.

(6) Ibid. 148.

(7) That somebody may rise at midnight and still have two watches before him, the minimum of the plural 'watches' being two.

(8) V. infra 9b. With reference to the morning Shema'.

(9) Since the day for royal personages begins at eight a.m. that is with the third hour when they rise. David by rising at midnight forestalled them by eight hours, i.e., two watches each having four hours.

(10) Lit., 'words of the Torah'. It would show disrespect for the dead.

(11) Ibid. 147. E.V. 'dawn'.

(12) Prov. VII, 9.

(13) That has a very light sleep, v. Suk. 26a.

(14) I Sam. XXX, 17.

(15) Neshef in this case denoting 'dawn'.

(16) Neshef in this case denoting 'dusk'.

(17) Ex. XI, 4.

(18) Lit., 'heaven'.

(19) Let the rich support the poor.

(20) We cannot be self-supporting to supply all our needs, any more than a handful can satisfy a lion, or the soil taken out of a pit fill its cavity.

(21) The divine oracle of the High-Priest's breast-plate.

(22) The text here has 'Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada', who is mentioned in II Sam. XX, 23.

(23) I Chron. XXVII, 34.

(24) II Sam. XVI, 23.

Talmud - Mas. Berachoth 4a

'Benaiah the son of Jehoiada', this means the Sanhedrin. 'And Abiathar',[1] these are the Urim and Tummim. And so it says: And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethi and Pelethi.[2] Why are they[3] called 'Kerethi' and 'Pelethi'? Kerethi, because their words are decisive [korethim]; Pelethi, because they are distinguished [mufla'im] through their words. And then it comes 'the captain of the King's host Joab'. R. Isaac b. Adda says: (Some say, R. Isaac the son of Addi says) Which verse?[4] Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp; I will awake the dawn.[5]

R. Zera says:[6] Moses certainly knew and David, too, knew [the exact time of midnight]. Since David knew, why did he need the harp? That he might wake from his sleep. Since Moses knew, why did he say 'about midnight'? — Moses thought that the astrologers of Pharaoh might make a mistake, and then they would say that Moses was a liar. For so a Master said: Let thy tongue acquire the habit of saying, 'I know not', lest thou be led to falsehoods [lying]. R. Ashi says: It[7] was at midnight of the night of the thirteenth passing into the fourteenth [of Nisan], and thus said Moses to Israel: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Tomorrow [at the hour] like[8] the midnight of to-night, I